

## **Department Of Managed Health Care**

### **LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REGULATIONS**

**Language has been a barrier to accessing health care for many enrollees.**

Enrollees who have limited English language proficiency (LEP) do not have meaningful access to covered health care services. The legislature enacted SB 853, requiring the DMHC to adopt regulations establishing standards and requirements for health care service plan language assistance programs, with the goal of providing translated materials and interpreter services for all HMO members.

**The DMHC has adopted regulations to create programs within HMOs that provide language assistance to all HMO members.**

The DMHC's regulations are designed to:

- Establish performance standards for plan language assistance programs to ensure meaningful access for LEP enrollees, and plan accountability for delivering language assistance services.
- Ensure that plans do not improperly delegate responsibility to providers who cannot deliver language services as required by SB 853 and the regulation.
- Ensure that health plan language assistance requirements do not disrupt existing effective language assistance programs in hospitals.

**The DMHC has solicited input from the public to ensure that the new regulations will enable patients and their health care providers to communicate effectively and be understood.**

- The regulation was developed in partnership with consumer organizations.
- More than 30 meetings were held with various stakeholder groups.
- Two public hearings, one in Sacramento and one in Los Angeles, were held to provide a broad spectrum of input.
- Key race and ethnicity data will be collected, which is a requirement that is above and beyond the legislative language.
- The regulation became effective on February 23, 2007.
- A joint industry workgroup will develop common approaches and standards to address plan and provider compliance concerns. The DMHC will monitor these efforts to ensure robust compliance with the regulation.
- Director Ehnes has taken the lead in advancing technological solutions that will eliminate language barriers to quality health care.